

# Pritchard Mayor,

Jovis, *sexto die* Septembr. 1633.  
*Annoque Regni Regis Caroli Se-*  
*cundi Angliæ, &c. xxxv<sup>to</sup>.*

**T**His Court doth desire Mr. *Hop-*  
*kins* to print his Sermon prea-  
ched before the Lord Mayor and Al-  
dermen and Citizens of this City, at  
*Bow-Church*, on *Monday* last, being  
the day of Humiliation for the Dis-  
mal Fire, *anno* 1666.

*Wagstaffe.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE  
LORD MAYOR,  
Aldermen and Citizens  
Of the CITY of LONDON,

In the Parish Church of S. Mary le Bow,  
September 3. 1683.

Being the day of Humiliation for the late  
DREADFULL FIRE.

By *William Hopkins*, B.D. and Prebendary of Worcester.

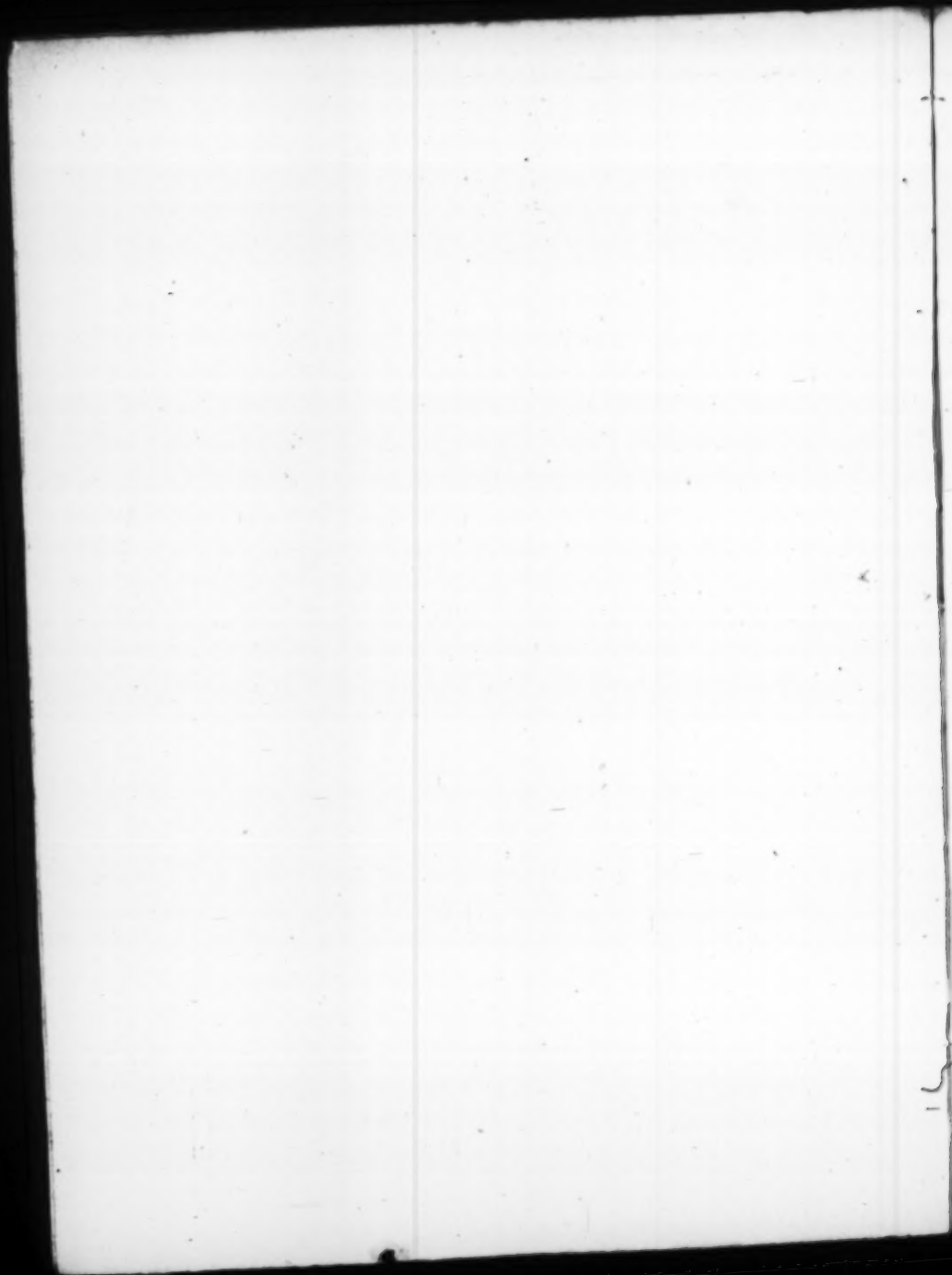
Ezra, IX. 13, 14.

*And after all this is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses; seeing that thou, our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such DELIVERANCE AS THIS:*

*Should we again break thy commandments— Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?*

L O N D O N,  
Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's Head*  
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1683.







TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
Sir *WILLIAM PRITCHARD*,  
LORD MAYOR  
Of the CITY of *LONDON*,  
AND TO  
THE HONOURABLE  
COURT of ALDERMEN.

My LORD,

**I** Am sufficiently conscious that there is nothing in this plain Discourse, but the honest design it prosecutes, worthy of that acceptance it found with the Honourable Audience before whom it was preached. Nevertheless, since it's your Lordship's pleasure, that I should make it more publick than I ever designed, I dare not dispute your commands or doubt your Patronage. I am sure I need it in a high degree, whether I consider the weakness of the discourse it self, or into what an ill-natured and censorious World it adventures. But I am little concerned what reception will be given it by curious and criti-

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*cal Readers, who reade and hear Sermons, as they do Plays, merely for entertainment, and to shew what Judges they are. I was not so sanguine either in the preaching or publishing of it as to expect it should doe much good on that sort of men.*

*But to persons of Piety and Candour, who receive the Word of God into good and honest hearts, I hope it may not be unserviceable. And if it may in any measure contribute toward the making us more truly penitent for what is past, or a more obedient people for the future, I shall think my self happy, and thankfully adore him whose strength was made manifest in my weakness.*

*To the Divine Protection and Blessing I humbly commend your Lordship, your Honourable Brethren and this great City which flourishes under your just and prudent Administration, and intreat your acceptance of this poor Testimony that I am in all humility,*

My LORD,

Your most obedient

and faithfull Servant,

*William Hopkins.*

A  
S E R M O N  
Preached before the  
Lord Mayor, &c.

Sept. 3. 1683.

---

JOHN, V. 14.

---Behold, thou art made whole: Sin no more,  
lest a worse thing come unto thee.

**I**N the beginning of this chapter S. John relates a memorable passage which is not recorded by any other Historian either Sacred or Profane. That there was at Jerusalem a pool called *Bethesda*, whose waters were at some times endued with a medicinal virtue. For an Angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the waters: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had, v. 4.

B

How

*Wide Light-  
foot, Hor.  
Heb. in Joan.  
Tertullian.  
adversus Ju-  
den, cap. 13.  
sub finem.*

How long those waters had been endued with that miraculous virtue, or how long it continued after our Saviour's Ascension is unknown. This onely is certain from History, that Miracles and the Spirit of Prophecy had ceased in the Jewish Church for several ages before our Saviour's birth, and both were restored but a little while before his manifestation in the flesh: And it is probable this miraculous water was one of the signs of his coming; it being a fit resemblance of that more pretious *λετεον*, or *bath*, his own blood, whose healing efficacy was not confined to a single Patient, but redounded to the advantage of the whole world, and whose purifying virtue was truly universal and able to  *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.

1 Joh. 1. 9.

The silence of the other Evangelists and the Jewish writers, as well as *Theophylact's* hint, may have occasioned the Learned Dr. *Hammond* to suspect, that the virtue of this pool was not miraculous, but natural. And he offers this Philosophical account of the matter.

*Dr. Ham-  
mond on Joh.  
V. Annot. a.*

That the waters were impregnated with some beneficial qualities derived from the entrails of beasts slain for Sacrifice, which he conceives were cast into that pool. And that at some set times an Officer or Messenger (not one of God's Angels) was sent in, who had skill to disturb the waters, *i. e.* to stir up and diffuse the particles of the entrails and blood in which the virtue lay; whereupon for some time after, till the virtuous particles sank again to the bottom, that pool was an healing Bath.

The Hypothesis is, I confess, very ingenious, and he confirms it with pertinent observations of what benefit in some distempers the Patient hath received, by the application of the warm skin, or vitals of a beast, or by putting him into the belly of a beast newly killed and opened.

And

But if we well consider them, several circumstances of our Evangelist's Narrative cannot consist with this Hypothesis. For though the entrails of beasts may have a suppling and restorative virtue, and in the way of a fomentation may relieve pains and weakness in the limbs, bruises and withered members, yet this is short of the efficacy which *S. John* ascribes to this bath, which seems to have been an universal Medicine. Now there are many distempers for which bathing and fomentation are no proper methods of cure; and if we must restrain the universal particle *whatsoever* to the diseases mentioned by *S. John*, I conceive the blind, who are expressly named, very unlikely to receive benefit thereby.

Again, If those cures were wrought by the stirring up and mixing of the virtue of the entrails with the water, it might almost constantly have been kept in motion, and many more might have enjoyed the benefit of cure, than it should seem there did. For the waters were troubled onely *καὶ τότε καὶ νῦν*, *seldom, at a certain season*, some think, but once in the year, at the Passover; others, at all the three great Feasts, and though perhaps several times at each Feast, yet at most but once in the day.

Again, Had the cure been wrought by any natural efficacy, why should the benefit be limited to him alone who first stepped in after the troubling of the water? it's scarce credible that the Pool was no larger than to hold one person, if the entrails of all the Paschal Sacrifices († whose number was very great) were ordinarily cast into it. If the virtuous particles of the entrails were well diffused, why might not these waters have cured as many as went in before they subsided? If it be said, they sunk quickly, it's much they should cure so much as one patient, for it's

v.

See Dr. Hammond's Annot.

† No less than 25500 according to the computation Dr. Hammond takes notice of in this Annotation.

by long continuance in them, and frequent use, that bathis relieve inveterate weakness, whereas it should seem once descending into the pool was sufficient.

And lastly, This account of the matter is contrary to the sentiments of the Ancients, who ascribe these cures to a supernatural power, and particularly || S. Chrysostome, more than once comparing the Pool of *Bethesda* to the Baptismal waters, makes the former a miraculous type of the latter.

|| In Joannem  
Homil. 35. &  
Tom. 5. Ho-  
mil. 62. in Pa-  
ralyt. demis-  
sum per recu-  
tam.

I need not labour farther in confutation of this opinion, which that excellent Authour delivers modestly, and onely as a conjecture, and therefore shall proceed to shew how our Blessed Lord, *who went about doing good*, came to this healing pool, and, among a multitude of expectants, is pleased to single out this poor Paralytick as the meekest object for him to shew his Divine power and compassion upon. Not that he deserved better than others, many of whose diseases might be pure infelicities, whereas his long infirmity was the fruit of his Sins: The miserable circumstances under which he lay, were the onely motives of our Saviour's pity.

Acts X. 38.

He considered, 1. the long time he had been in that weak and helpless condition, 38 years, and perhaps had for the greatest part of that time in vain waited at *Bethesda* for cure. *Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been a long time in that case.* And then, 2ly, he considered his Impotence and Poverty, which rendered him unlikely ever to receive help there, being unable to step first into the pool after the troubling of the waters, and having no friend or servant to put him in. His sad condition moved pity in the Blessed *Jesus*, who immediately, with a word, restored spirits to his weak nerves, and strength and motion to his withered limbs.

v. 6.

v. 7.

Such

Such a surprising mercy might carry a man of no extraordinary devotion to the Temple with a Soul full of Joy and Thankfulness. Thither the impotent person quickly went, to offer up his Praises to God; and thither our Saviour followed him, to complete the cure which was scarce half wrought at *Bethesda*. His Body indeed was there made whole, but his better part, his Soul, still needed the Physician; and till that also were healed, the cause of his long infirmity still remained, and he was in danger of relapsing into a much worse condition than that out of which he was newly recovered. The Blessed *Jesus* therefore applies him to the cure of his spiritual maladies, and in my Text prescribes a Sovereign Antidote against all possible danger of a relapse, gives him this † *ψυχραια* † *Cyril Alex.*  
*παρ' ἑλμα*, this *wholsome ghostly advice*, Behold <sup>in loc.</sup>  
*thou art made whole: Sin no more, lest a worse thing*  
*come unto thee.*

In which words I shall observe three Particulars hinted by *S. Chrysostome* on this place.

1. An implicit Accusation and gentle Reproof of his past life. A plain intimation that his tedious bodily distemper was the punishment of his Sins. Our Saviour's infinite candour, which absolved both *the blind man* and *his parents*, and declared, that his calamity ought not to be imputed either to his own or their Sins, could not acquit this impotent person. || He doth not openly shame him before the multitudes at *Bethesda*, He doth not publicly reproach his former lewd conversation: but finds him out in the Temple; and privately admonishes him to amend his life. *Sin no more*, or as *μὴτι* may be rendred, *Sin no longer now*, implies him formerly to have been a grievous Sinner, and that his long infirmity was his punishment.

2. These

Τὸ μὴτι ἐστὶ  
 τὸ ἰδοὺ μὴ  
 ἴδωμαι; ὅτι  
 αὐτὸς ἰδὼν  
 αὐτὸν ἐπὶ  
 τῷ ὄρει τῷ  
 ἁγίῳ. Chrys. in  
 loc.  
 Joh. IX. 2, 3.

|| Chrys. Tom.  
 V. Hom. 62.



2. These words are an Admonition, and contain wholesome advice for the future conduct of his life.

*Sin no more.*

Παραγγέλλει  
τι ἐνδεχόμενον  
καὶ τὸ ἐξέβη  
ἐξ ὧν ἐκλήθη  
ἐκ τῆς ἀπορίας  
ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.  
Chrys. in loc.

3. This Admonition is enforced with a twofold argument, the one drawn from the obligation which was laid upon him by this great mercy of his miraculous cure, and the other from the danger of a relapse. He puts him in mind of the signal favour he had newly received of God, *Behold, thou art made whole*, [by a miracle,] and oughtest not, in point of gratitude, to offend the Authour of so great a blessing. And then withall he sets before him the danger of returning to his old vomit, threatening him not onely with the forfeiture of the mercy thus miraculously conferred upon him, but also with some heavier Judgment, *lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Having thus opened the words, I shall deduce from them these three very natural and easie Observations.

1. That great calamities are generally inflicted by God for the punishment of Sin.

2. That when God is pleased to remove such calamities, we are obliged to forsake those Sins for which they were inflicted.

3. That if upon the removal of such calamities we do not forsake those Sins for which they were inflicted, we may justly dread much sorer Judgments.

I shall speak briefly to each of these in order, and in conclusion apply all to this Solemn occasion.

I. Great calamities are generally inflicted by God for the punishment of Sin. I say, *generally*, not always; for God hath other ends in some afflictions, when they



they concern onely the single persons that suffer them. And yet even these are for the most part punishments, and should be so esteemed by the Sufferers: but to great Societies, to Nations and Cities, they are always punishments. Though God doth not now interpose in so immediate and extraordinary a way in the government of the Kingdoms of the world, as he did in that of the *Jews*, the form of whose government was a Theocracy, and the supreme civil Magistrate was but a Vice roy or Deputy to *Jehovah*, who was their King, who gave them their Political Laws and frequently executed them also upon Offenders with his own hand; yet doth his Providence still visibly appear in recompencing politick Bodies in this world according to their works; in protecting and prospering religious, vertuous and just Nations, and in punishing such as are profane, dissolute and faithless. And, in truth, if it please God to punish Cities and Nations, as such, he must doe it in this world; for though every member of any Society must appear at the Judgment seat of *Christ*, and may receive the things done in the body, as well Politick as Natural, whether they be good or bad; yet those Societies themselves will cease with this world, and cannot be punished in the next.

See Dr. Hicks  
his Peculium  
Dei. Joseph.  
contra Appi-  
onem, & An-  
tiquit. lib. 4.  
Moses sic lo-  
qui docetur,  
Aqari yd a  
Dei niquum

Now there concur two very different causes to the punishment of Sinners, *viz.* The Righteousness of God, and their own Unrighteousness. The latter justly meriting those calamities which the former inflicts. So that in every sad Providence we must acknowledge the just hand of God lifted up against us, and recompencing the evil works of our own hands upon us.

1. In all our Sufferings we must behold the righteous hand of God, by whose Providence afflictions befall

befall sinfull men. For, as *Eliphaz* saith, *Job* V. 6. *Affliction cometh not forth out of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground.* The most inconsiderable and seemingly contingent events, such as the *fall of a Sparrow*, or the *turn of a die*, are under the government of Divine Providence. And therefore it must needs be much more interested in what befalls so noble a creature as Man, nay great Societies of men. The Calamities of Cities and Kingdoms must not be imputed to mere chance; nor may we think that God is no farther concerned with them, than by his general concurrence with the immediate and second causes of them.

Matt. XI. 29.  
Prov. XVI.  
33.

Ὁ Θεὸς ποιεῖ  
τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ  
ἐν τῇ γῇ.

If we suffer by Fire or by Sea, by immoderate Rain or Drought, we must behold these as *scourges in God's hand*. If we are punished either by War or Pestilence, we must esteem both our Enemies and the destroying Angel *God's Ministers* and the *Executioners* of his *just*, though *severe*, wrath. *He makes the creatures his weapons for vengeance on his enemies*, *Wisd.* V. 18.

Ezek. V. 16.

Isa. XXXIV.  
6.

If the Sea overflow its banks, and drown a Countrey, it's by God's commission that the Ocean enlarges its Territories and swallows up a sinfull Land. If Famine afflict a Nation, whether the immediate causes be excessive drought or rains, know, that it is the Lord who breaks the *staff of bread*, who sendeth unseasonable rain, and withholdeth it in its season. If the Pestilence rage in a City and consume its Inhabitants, this evil also is of the Lord. If we undergo the miseries of War, and our Enemies prevail over us, we must remember, that it is the *sword of the Lord* that is in their hands and *fills it self with our blood*. *They shall know that I am the LORD when I put MY SWORD into the hand of the King of Babylon*, *Ezek.* XXX. 25. It is the Lord of hosts that  
pleads

pleads with us by the Sword; and sells us into the hands of our enemies, because we have sold our selves to work wickedness. If the Fire consume our dwellings and lay our Cities in Ashes, the Prophet tells us, that God pleads with sinfull flesh *by fire* as well as *by the sword*. *He sendeth fire upon our Cities* and flames to devour our Palaces. Isai. LXVI. 16.  
Hof. VIII. 14.

In short, by whatever hands we suffer, by whatever instruments he pleases to afflict us, we must bear the rod and consider *who hath appointed it*, Mich. VI. 9. We must acknowledge our sufferings to be from God, and the chastisement of our sins.

2. Whilst we behold God as the Authour of our calamities, we must ascribe them to his Justice, and not forget that the cause of our sufferings is in our selves. For God would not inflict them, did not we both need and deserve them. The wrath of God is never revealed but against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And even when his hand is *heaviest* upon us, our punishments are much *lighter* than our iniquities deserve. There had been no such thing as Vengeance belonging to God, but for the Wickedness of his Rebellious creatures. Sin and Punishment are as nearly related as the Cause and Effect, and the latter in the very notion of it implies the former: For no suffering is properly a punishment unless inflicted for Sin. Hence in the language of the Holy Scriptures *to bear sin* or *iniquity* signifies *to be punished* or *put to death* for it. When a man is punished for his Sins, he is said *to eat the fruit of his ways*, Prov. I. 31. *to be recompensed according to his deeds and the works of his own hands*, Jer. XXV. 14. *and to possess his iniquity*, Job XIII. 26. All which forms of speech import our sins to be the meritorious and impulsive cause of our calamities. A Des quidem punimur, sed ipsi facimus, ut puniamur, Salvian. de Gub. Dei, l. 8.  
Ezra IX. 13.  
Job XI. 6.  
Psalm. CIII. 10.  
Exod. xxviii. 43.  
Levit. XXIV. 15, 16.  
And Christ is said to bear the sins of many, i. e. in their punishment, Isa. LIII. 11, 12.

And as we must acknowledge the Justice of God in our sufferings, so must we likewise own his goodness, his wisdom and fatherly care of us. In our present lapsed condition, in this state of Sin and Frailty, he would not truly *love us* should he not, when he sees it necessary, *rebuke and chasten us*. Should he not *visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes*, we might have just ground to fear that he had *utterly taken his loving-kindness from us*, and was about to *break his Covenant*. It will neither consist with the Honour of his Justice and Wisdom, nor yet with his Love to us, that we should be permitted to sin without punishment.

Rev. III. 19.  
Heb. XII. 5.  
Psal. LXXXIX.  
32, 33, 34.

I know some men refer all to irrelative Decrees, or tell us that vindictive Justice is natural to God, and that he must sacrifice some of his creatures in Hell fire to the honour of that Attribute. Nay, that he hath foredamned the greatest part of mankind by mere Prerogative, and purely for the exercise of his Sovereign Power.

Exod. xxxiv.  
6, 7.

Psal. CXLV.  
6.

Ezek. xxxiii.  
11.

2 Pet. III. 9.

But this account of God differs infinitely from that he gives us of himself in the Holy Scriptures. They represent him *mercifull and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*. They tell us that, *He is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. That he hath no pleasure in the Death of a sinner. That he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto repentance*. He never goes about to get himself glory in the death of a sinner till he sees the sinner *will die*, that he is desperate and incorrigible, that he hardens his heart to that degree, that neither gentleness nor severity can work upon him.

He

He seeks no advantages against his wretched creatures. Though to punish be his *work*, it is his *strange* Iſai. XXVIII. 21. *work*. He never sets about it but with reluctance, and when we compell him to it, for the vindication of Justice and Providence. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. III. 33. We have no reason to arraign his Justice, or murmur at the severity of his Judgments, since we suffer but the punishment and less than the desert of our Sins.

Especially if we add this consideration, That the chastisements we bear are for our profit; and though for the present, while we feel the smart of them, *afflictions are not joyous, but grievous*; yet, if we improve them duly, and with patience wait their issue, they will bring forth to us the peaceable fruits of Righteousness. As they were intended by our Heavenly Father, so will they in the event work for our good. If his judgments teach us Righteousness, and we learn obedience by the things which we have suffered, *all their fruit will be to take away our sin, and to make us partakers of his Holiness*. Iſai. XXVII. 9. Heb. XII. 10. But whatever the effect of our calamities may prove, whether they operate thus kindly or no, we must needs justify God amidst our sufferings, and take to our selves shame, confessing with Azarias, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, in all the things thou hast done unto us — according to truth and Judgment didst thou bring all these things upon us, because of our sins. We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, departing from thee.* Song of the 3 Children, v. 3, 4, 5.

II. That when God is pleased to remove such Calamities, we are obliged to forsake those Sins for which they were inflicted. *Behold, thou art made whole: Sin no more.*

What, Sin no more? This is an hard saying, who can hear it? Doth our Saviour oblige us to impossibilities? Doth not *Solomon* assure us that there is *not a just man upon the Earth, that doeth righteousness, and sinneth not?* Eccles. VII. 20. Doth not the Apostle say that, *In many things we offend all?* James, III. 2. How saith our Saviour then, Sin no more?

But, after all, our Saviour's sense is obvious: he doth not oblige the impotent man to perfect and sinless obedience. He too well understood our frame, and was too well acquainted with the strength of Temptation and the weakness of frail flesh and blood, to make spotless innocence necessary to his continuance in that state of health to which he was miraculously restored. But this is the sum and importance of his advice, that upon his recovery he should break off his sinfull course of life, that he should live no longer in habitual and wilfull disobedience, that he should abstain from all crying Sins and such as pull down vengeance on mens heads; especially, that he should beware of those sins (whatever they were) for which God had afflicted him with eight and thirty years weakness. This was our Saviour's meaning, and in this sense our Apostle must be understood, *1 John*, V. 18. where he saith, *he that is born of God sinneth not*, i. e. not habitually, not deliberately, not presumptuously.

*Decepti aut  
lubrico atatis,  
aut núbilo er-  
roris, aut vi-  
tio ignorantie,  
aut postremo,  
lapsu fragili-  
tatis humane.  
Salvian. con-  
tra Avarit.  
l. 1.*

God doth not use to follow men with heavy plagues for light offences. It is not every transgression, that is recompensed in the Earth. Such sins as are in a sort the unavoidable effects of humane frailty and ignorance, and are incident to the best of men in this state of imperfection and temptation, do not provoke his severe resentments. No, they are Sins of a deeper die, of a more enormous and scandalous nature  
for

for which God is wont to visit. Such as have a mixture of presumption and malice, or at least proceed from the gross neglect, if not from the direct contempt of God and Religion. Such Sins as are highly injurious to our Brethren and pernicious to humane Society. These are the Sins whose punishment God will not turn away. And when at any time he hath punished a people for them, and afterwards remembering mercy laies aside his rod, he expects that such a people should remove those abominations out of the midst of them.

For God prosecutes the same design both in the severe and in the more gentle dispensations of his Providence. He labours to reclaim a perverse and crooked generation, and omits no kind of method proper to effect it. When he threatens us, he admonishes us of our duty and danger; when he chastens us, he calls our Sins to remembrance, he admonisheth us to amend our ways; and put away the evil of our doings: when he removes his rod, and again exercises patience and long suffering towards us, he vouchsafes to make a farther experiment, what effect goodness will have upon us, and whether it will (at least after severity) lead us to repentance.

Though in their prosperity Sinners are too apt to despise the Riches of God's goodness, yet after they have been humbled by his heavy Judgments Mercy will be likely to have a more kind and successfull operation. In War we commonly see, that the Sword onely begins the Conquest, which is finished and crowned by the Victour's clemency. The stubborn enemy who valued not his friendship, when subdued by his victorious arms, will gladly submit to the Conquerour's Mercy. Nay, even wild beasts that are fierce and mischievous, are onely brought under  
by



by chains, blows and hunger, and prepared to be thoroughly tamed and made serviceable by their Keeper's kindness. So that unless we are more savage and brutish than they, after afflictions we must needs yield to the irresistible force of God's goodness and loving-kindness.

Though we had no sense of our deep obligations to his *infinite goodness* whilst his  *blessings*  flowed in a continual and uninterrupted stream from that fountain, yet since our pipes have been cut off, and bitter waters have flowed instead of sweet and refreshing streams, certainly if God please to remember his old loving-kindness, it will relish the sweeter. After we have been bound *in affliction and iron* for our Rebellion against God, if we be once released, surely *the cords of a man, and the soft bands of love* will hold us faster than ever. This good success God seems to expect when his mercy heals those wounds which he made for our Sins. He seems to make trial whether the good effects which appear to have been wrought on us by our Afflictions are real and durable. For whilst we are under the lash, the success cannot be so well and certainly observed. The Dog must recover his sickness before he will return to his vomit. Whilst we feel the smart of the rod, we are apt to call those Sins to remembrance for which we think our selves to suffer; we are apt to take up good Resolutions against them; to make fair Promises of reformation, and to bind them with most solemn Vows. But the Rod must be removed before we can come to the Test; before it can appear how firm and steady our Resolutions, how sincere our Promises were, and whether we will faithfully pay unto the Lord those Vows which we made in the day of Trouble.



So that when it pleases God to deliver us out of those miseries which our Sins have brought upon us, we are to consider, that we are in a *state of Probation*, we are *upon Tryal*. And we are farther under a double obligation to forsake those Sins for which we lately smarted. We have the voluntary obligation of our own Vows upon us, and we are bound in point of Gratitude to God to *Sin no more*. He will esteem the faithfull performance of our *Holy Resolutions* the most *Authentick Evidence* of our *Thankfulness*, and our future *Obedience* our best *Peace-offering*. When God hath put an end to *his controversie with a Land*, and vouchsafes yet once more to *speak peace to his people*, he expects that they *should not turn again unto folly*. But in case they do not answer so reasonable an expectation, if they offer him fresh affronts, or repeat their old ones, they will find the Truce broken by their own Treachery, and Vengeance returning armed with double fury. Men have no reason to promise themselves Peace so long as they boldly put Heaven to defiance, and fight against God. He may perhaps give them a little respite, he may change their punishment, and not continually lash them with the same Rod, but till they cease provoking him there will be no end of their calamities.

Psal. LXXXV.  
8.

III. That if upon the removal of such Calamities we do not forsake those Sins for which they were inflicted, we may justly dread sorer Judgments. *Lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Almighty God in dealing with his sinfull creatures is pleased to observe the method of skilfull Physicians, who begin with the most gentle and easie remedies, searching and cleansing the wound with as little pain as may be to the Patient; but if the wound putrifie  
and

Isai. IX. 1.

and gangrene, they are forced to proceed to more painfull operations, such as launcing, incision and searing; and when after all they find the malignity and venome of the gangrene is such as no remedies can conquer, they are forced to cut off the incurable member. Thus doth God at first exercise the Sinner with gentle corrections, seeming to be not without hope that they may prove strong enough to work his Reformation, but if they fail of success, he proceeds to greater severities in proportion to the guilt and obstinacy of the Offender. Thus he dealt with his ancient people the *Jews*, *At first he lightly afflicted the land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the Sea.* As men do not mount *per saltum* at one leap to the height of all Impiety and Profaneness, but wax worse and worse by degrees, till at last they become desperately wicked: So neither doth God use extremity at first, he doth not pour out the full vials of his Indignation at once, but his Judgments grow gradually heavier, till at length vengeance accomplisheth the ruine of the incorrigible and desperate Rebel.

A remarkable instance of what hath been said we have in *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, who oppressed *Israel*, and refused to obey the voice of the Lord; who by his Prophets commanded them to let his people go. He began with light afflictions, and as oft as *Pharaoh* seemed to repent he removed them: When *Pharaoh* saw there was respite, he hardned his heart; whereupon God sent other Plagues upon *Egypt*, and followed them with one Judgment after another, punishing them first in their Waters, then in their Corn and Cattle, next in their Bodies with sore Blains and Boils; after that, in the Death of their  
First-

First-born ; and lastly, *Pharaoh* having many times wilfully hardened his own heart, God hardened it penally to his ruine ; so that pursuing the Children of *Israel* through the Red-sea he was drowned with his whole Host.

Nor was this a singular case , a particular method wherein God dealt onely with *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*. For thus he treated his own peculiar people *Israel*, for whose sake he had sent all those prodigious Plagues on *Egypt*. When they murmured in the Wilderness, he chastised them several ways. When they waxed wanton in the Land of *Canaan* and revolted to Idolatry , he suffered the neighbour Nations to infect their Land , to take their Cities, to defeat their Armies, to oppress them and bring them under Tribute: after a while he would deliver them; when they revolted again, he punish'd them some other way. As their obstinacy encreased, so did his severity. He suffered the X Tribes first to go into Captivity, and after a while he caused the King of *Babylon* to carry away *Juda* Captive, and lay waste both the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*. For 70 years they sate in *Babylon*, and then God brought back their Captivity, and so favoured them that they rebuilt the City and Temple; but as they returned to their ancient dwellings so did they to their Sins, and continued a stiff-necked and rebellious generation, despising the goodness of God , contemning his threatnings, killing his Prophets, crucifying his own Son; and having now filled up the measure of their iniquities, God delivered them into the hands of the *Romans*, who destroyed their Nation, burnt the City and Temple of *Jerusalem*, rased their foundations, and litterally fulfilled our Saviour's Prediction , that there should not be one stone left upon another.

Matt. XXIV.

2.

D

Now

Now there are several ways in which God is wont to bring worse things upon obstinate and unreformed Sinners. I shall instance in Three.

1. When he brings the same Calamities thicker and oftner upon them, and though he scourge them with the same Rod, yet he increases the number of their stripes. Their enemies make frequent incurfions upon them, they suffer by frequent Plagues and Fires. Thus, as the Psalmist threatens, *many sorrows shall be to the wicked.* God will raise them up enemies on every side, and as he threatens the Jews, *he will send many fishers, and they shall fish them, and after, he will send many hunters, and they shall hunt them, and make a prey of them, and he will recompense their iniquity and their sin double.* Jer. XVI. 16, 18. God will double his blow upon every fresh provocation; and as the Sinner multiplies his Transgressions, so will the Divine vengeance multiply his Plagues. *If ye will walk contrary to me, saith the Lord, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more Plagues upon you, according to your sins.* Lev. XXVI. 21.

2. A worse thing happens to a relapsed Sinner when God inflicts forer and heavier Judgments than before. And this is not unusual. Those whom whips will not reform *he chastises with Scorpions.* If the ordinary instrument of Discipline, *the Rod,* hath been long used in vain, *he whets his glittering Sword,* and bends his Bow. *He opens his Armory,* and ransacks all the Treasures of his Wrath for Instruments of Cruelty and Death, *and brings forth the weapons of his Indignation.*

Or, which is worse than the severest Temporal calamity that can befall men, he gives them up to a Reprobate sense, because *they have* (as the Prophet speaks) *a revolting and rebellious heart.* He casts them

them off, as unworthy to be under his farther care and discipline; he abandons them to their own lusts, resolving *to strike them no more*, that he will *cause* Isai. I. 5. *his fury towards them to rest*, and that *his Jealousie shall depart from them*, that he will *be quiet*, and be *angry no more*, Ezek. XVI. 42.

3. A worse thing happens to revolting Sinners when God inflicts punishments for a worse purpose, not for the Sinner's reformation, but for his own honour. When the sufferings that befall them are vindictive, and not designed for their correction. When Judgments are not intended to teach them righteousness, but to make them examples for the terrour and warning of others. When God smites, but not in kindness, and there drops no balm from his Rod, but he *wounds them with the wounds of an enemy, and with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of their iniquities, and because their sins were increased* ||, || The Syriack adds, even to impotence. Jer. XXX. 14. And when neither frequent and severe punishments, nor yet intervals of mercy produce fruits meet for repentance, there is all the reason in the world for Sinners to expect in some or other of the forementioned ways they shall feel sadder effects of God's displeasure. It's both *necessary* and *just* that some worse thing should come unto them.

1. It's *Necessary*. Obstinate and revolting Sinners need sharper afflictions and heavier judgments to rouse and work upon them. For by frequent relapses into Sin, and perseverance in it, they contract an ill habit of Soul; their distempers get strength; and the more inveterate they are, the greater difficulty there will be in removing them. For this reason relapsed Sinners will need to repeat their bitter potions the oftner, and the dose must be increased in proportion to the malignity of the dis-

ease, if gentle medicines have no effect, the bills must be altered, strong Physick must be administred, and the ill humours evacuated by more violent and churlish Purgatives. When men grow worse and worse under the milder dispensations of Providence, and presume to *add sin to sin*, there is no help for them, but God must also, as the Psalmist speaks, *add iniquity to their iniquity*, i. e. increase the severity of their punishments.

Isa. XXX. 1.

Psal. LXIX.

27.

2. As it is Necessary, so also is it *Just*. It is a righteous thing with God, in regard such obstinate and backsliding Sinners *deserve* sorer judgments. Repeated Sin contracts a deeper guilt, and all mitigating pleas are insignificant, when crimes become habitual, especially under the circumstances of the person in my Text. When men sin on after great Judgments and great Deliverances, it is an argument of great Presumption and Malice; that men are wilfull and stubborn, and, as *Elihu* speaks, *Job XXXIV. 37. Add rebellion to their sin*. Their guilt is also farther aggravated by their Ingratitude, which is a Sin of the foulest complexion and deepest stain. No Provocation is more unpardonable than the abuse of Mercy. It is recorded by the Psalmist as an aggravation of the stupid perverseness of the *Israelites*; That they

Psal. CVII. 7. *understood not God's wonders in Egypt, that they remembered not the multitude of his mercies; but provoked him at the Sea, even at the RED SEA*. Every part of the verse is a smart reproach of their sottish Unthankfulness. That they took no warning by God's Prodigious Judgments on the *Egyptians*; that they forgot his Mercies towards themselves no less wonderfull; not single mercies, but great multitudes of them; and, after all, *provoked him at the Sea, even at the RED SEA*. The repetition is an emphatical aggravation of their Ingratitude, *Even at the red Sea*, through which

which God had just before miraculously opened them a safe and dry passage, where he had destroyed their enemies before their eyes, and secured them from ever returning to their former bondage; there they murmured against him and provoked him. When the *hand of the Lord hath been lifted up against the wicked but they will not see it*, and afterwards favour hath been shewn them, *but they will not learn righteousness*, it is an argument that *they offend of malicious Wickedness*, and are not onely unworthy but incapable of mercy. That they are incorrigible and desperate, Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, that farther long-suffering will be a sort of Cruelty to them, and swift destruction a degree of mercy; nay the onely mercy they are capable of: For it may be some little abatement of their miseries in the next world, that they lived no longer in this, and were not permitted to treasure up so immense a weight of wrath as in a long life they would have heaped up unto themselves.

Isai. XXVI.  
10, 11.

In Conclusion, when neither Judgments nor Mercies will work reformation, and men presume to *Sin on* against all sorts of admonitions and obligations to *Sin no more*, what can such wretched creatures expect, but worse and worse calamities, even the very worst of all Plagues: That Vengeance should come arm'd with flames of fire unquenchable and triumph in their Eternal Ruine.

Thus I have briefly considered the three observations I made from the words, and am to crave but a little more of your Patience, whilst I apply what hath been said to this Solemn occasion.

The words of our Saviour in my Text, are a Subject very proper for the entertainment of our most serious



Οὐκ ἐμὴν  
μὲν τὰυτὰ  
παράγειν ἔλ-  
λὰς ὅς' αὖ  
κρίνα πᾶσι  
Chryl. in loc.

rious thoughts this day: and though they were spoken to the impotent man alone, yet were intended for the admonition of usall, who are in circumstances exactly parallel with his. God had wounded us for our Transgressions, and hath healed us by a miracle of his mercy. And as Christ found him in the Temple, so are we all here before the Lord in his house of Prayer: and considering the happy change of the State of this eminent City, since the appointment of this Anniversary Fast, I may say we are in the Temple upon a much like occasion.

Pla. CXLVII.  
13.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, we are not now assembled to weep over her smoaking Ruines, and to mingle our tears with her ashes. We have no reason to bewail her as a disconsolate Widow, for she sits as a Queen again, and *her Children within her are blessed*. She lies no longer on ruinous heaps, the Scorn and Derision of her Enemies, but she is risen as a Phoenix out of her Ashes, the astonishing joy of her friends, and the envy of all that hate her. As that dreadfull Fire which consumed her, hath been thought a lively resemblance of the general Conflagration at the last day, so methinks this City risen out of the dust, is no faint Embleme of the Resurrection. *It is raised in glory*. It is rebuilt with greater beauty, its structures both private and publick, Civil and Sacred, are far more magnificent than before. So that I may very well apply the first part of our Saviour's words to this great and eminent City. *Behold, thou art made whole*: and add St. Chrysostom's gloss, "*not by thy merit, but by the Divine mercy and power*. For the rebuilding of it in so short a time and so great Splendour, is little short of a miracle.

But though we do upon this account, in some measure forget our Sorrows, yet there is still just occasion



casion for our solemn Humiliation this day; to spend it in mourning, and in all sorts of Penitential exercises. For though the calamitous effects of the Fire be well nigh worn off, yet whilst our Sins which kindled it remain, they will afford us perpetual cause of Fasting, and give us occasion to look back with Sorrow, and to look forward with Fear. When we reflect and see what destruction they have already wrought in this Land and City, who among us hath so hard a heart as not to melt into Tears? And when we forecast what farther and greater Calamities we have reason to apprehend from them, is not the dreadful prospect enough to make our hearts tremble and melt within us like wax? What is onely intimated in the case of the Paralytick is a notorious truth in ours, *Our Sins were the cause of the Fire.* We confess it in the Publick Office of the Day, we have erected a Pillar of Infamy in the midst of our City, to be an everlasting memorial of the dreadful Judgments of God, and the dreadful Sins of this Generation, and which is sad to consider, our Sins themselves reign in the midst of us, and testify against us. I hope therefore no man will have either the Folly or the Impudence to wash his hands and say, *I have contributed no Fuel to these Flames of London.*

Though a late Inscription charge the Papists with the Fire, it was not designed to absolve our Sins, the undoubted Bouteuseus, and the worst sort of Incendiaries. Though it might be intended to continue an immortal hatred of Popery; sure it was never meant to reconcile us to our provoking abominations. This would have been to ridicule the Wisdom and Piety of our Governours, and contradict the best design of the Monument.

There is nothing so much hinders the good effects  
of

of Chastisements; as transferring the blame on others, or imputing them to accidents, and resting in the second causes of them. But certainly we have the least Temptation that may be to any thing of that kind : For never were there more visible tokens of the just Vengeance of God, than in the Fire of *London*. Those circumstances which we are too prone to call accidents, that concurred to the spreading of the Fire, shew the Providence of that God whom we had provoked. Whatever creatures assisted to the swift propagation of the Flames ; whether evil Instruments, or the heat and drought of the preceding Summer, or the Winds, they were all God's *Militia* armed against us. And neither strong East-winds nor the famous *Papish* or *French* Fire-balls carried on the Fire so much as the Trains our Sins had laid in all quarters of the City, and the fierce Blasts of God's just displeasure.

Having so severely smarted for our Faults already, methinks we should be well disposed to receive our Saviour's advice, *Sin no more*. One would think our sad experience should afford us some security against suffering again in the same way, and on the same account. We see that Beasts and Birds will not be twice taken in the same snare ; and shall we be more irrational than Brutes, and suffer our selves to be often overtaken with the same Faults ? Oh that we could be blest with so happy a sight as that Reformation one might reasonably expect, that either so heavy a Judgment as the Fire, or so great a Mercy as the Resurrection of this City, should singly produce ! But alas, we are all grievous *Revólters*. We have been made worse by our Afflictions and hardened by our Sufferings, we like the Anvil have reverberated the strokes of God's hammer, and they have made no impression upon us.

Jer. VI. 28.  
Iis ipsis qui-  
bus coarcebantur  
plagis scelera  
crescebant; ut puta-  
res, poenam ip-  
sam criminum  
quasi matrem  
esse vitorum,  
Salv. de Gub.  
l. 6.

It is a sad Observation that *Lactantius* makes of the *Heathen Romans*, That they never remember God but in times of publick Calamity. And yet *Salvian's* observation of the incorrigible temper of the *Christian Romans* is much more lamentable; That no part of the Roman Empire, though chastised with the severest plagues by Heaven, was reformed thereby. It behoves us to consider how far both these sad observations may be verified of us, and whether what the Prophet saith of *Judah* may not be too truly and pertinently applied to us. This is a Nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord, neither receiveth Correction, Jer. VII. 28. How little influence had this sore Judgment upon us? Did those of us that escaped that Plague repent of their Sins? Did the Fir-tree bowle because the Cedar was fallen, or the Oaks of *Babylon* for the Forest of the Vintage? Did our lesser Cities and neighbouring Places take warning by this Calamity of our Metropolis? No sure, for then they would not, as since they have done, have tasted of the same cup. How did the Sufferers behave themselves? was there any visible amendment? did they come purer out of the Fire? Nothing less. The Fire that consumed our estates, abated nothing of our Luxury; and the Flames of our Lust raged, when most of the fuel that had maintained them was spent. How many here, as *Salvian* observes at *Triers*, lay drunk up and down in the warm ruins? How did we ruffle it in rich Silks, Lace and all sorts of bravery, when it would have better become us to have lain prostrate before God in Sackcloth and Ashes? How many were feasting and carousing at the Tavern, when they should have been in the Temple fasting and deprecating farther miseries? When the greatest part of the City lay in heaps, and the poor remainders of it were black

*Lactant. Instit. l. 2. c. 11. nisi dum in malis sunt.*

*Neque ullam penitus Romanis orbis aut Romani nominis portionem, quamlibet graviter plagis celestibus casam unquam fuisse correptam.* *Salvian. de Gub. l. 6.*

*Zach. XI. 2.*

and disfigured by the Fire, when which way soever we turned our eyes, we could not avoid observing our desolations, and the sad marks of God's displeasure, how few of us abated the least delight, saw one Play the less, or spent in Devotion one hour the more? If any did not run to the same excess of riot they had done before, was it not, as *Salvian* speaks, *Miseriæ beneficium, non disciplinæ*, rather to be ascribed to their Poverty than their Vertue?

But perhaps these severe courses suited not our temper, it may be we are of that generous disposition which is to be wrought on by kindness, and favours have not been ill bestowed upon us. I would to God it were so.

Deut. xxxii,  
15.

Quievit pa-  
 ramper In-  
 micorum au-  
 dacia, nec ta-  
 men nostrorum  
 malitia. Re-  
 cesserant hos-  
 tes à civibus  
 nec civis à  
 suis sceleribus,  
 Gildas de Ex-  
 cid. Britan.  
 Ἀνατρε-  
 πυντες ὅ ἐξ ἑ  
 πινεσκαι ἐπ'  
 οὐρανῶν αὐτῶν  
 ἐν τῆς ἀγῶ-  
 νος τοῦ κινηθῆ-  
 ναι. Philo in  
 vita Mosi.

But alas, is not the contrary evident? Doth not Prosperity make us proud and wanton? Have we not with *Jesurun* waxed fat and kicked, have we not forsok the God that made us, and lightly esteemed the Rock of our Salvation? How have we in the midst of God's blessings forgotten all Sobriety and Gratitude, forgotten both God and our selves? The lucid Intervals of mercy have not brought us into our right minds, nor yet prevailed with us for the least intermission of sinning. As *Gildas* complains of our Ancestours. Nay, as it is observed of *Pharaoh*, the onely use we have made of that respite we have had between Judgments, hath been like Wrestlers, to take breath, to recover spirits and strength for a fresh combat with Heaven, and that we may be able with greater fury and violence to fly in the face of God.

Had we been (as is suggested) of that generous temper that must be managed by fair means, God hath made sufficient Tryal of us in that way.

He hath heaped favours upon us, and even laden

us with his benefits. But in return we have *made him* Isai. XLIII. 24.  
*to serve with our sins, and wearied him with our iniquities.* If the Fire drove out the unclean Spirit that  
 haunted our old buildings, he seems to be now re-  
 turned with seven other evil Spirits more wicked than  
 himself, and to have taken possession of our new  
 habitations. For our Impiety and Contempt of God  
 is greater than ever, our Pride and Vanity prodigious,  
 our Luxury and Debauchery hath outstript all ex- Nil erit ulte-  
 rius quod nos-  
 tris moribus  
 addat Posteritas. Juv.  
 Sat. 1.  
 amples of former ages, and are not to be out-done, I  
 wish they never may be matched by the generations to  
 come. Have not Oppression, Deceit and Perjury o-  
 verspread us? And may not that be said of *London*  
 that the Prophet spake of *Gilead*, *It is a City of them* Hof. VI. 12.  
*that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood?* Are not  
 Adultery and Whoredom esteemed so venial Sins, that  
 they are seldom chastised with greater severity than a  
 smile? Is not the cry of Sins gone up to Heaven, like  
 the cry of *Sodom*, and yet we dread not a like over-  
 throw?

Nay, as though our Wickedness brought on ruine  
 too slowly whilst it operated onely in a moral way,  
 as the meritorious cause of it, we have of late traded  
 in those Sins which have a natural and more quick  
 tendency to Destruction. We have rent the Church  
 by causeless Schisms, and divided the Kingdom against  
 it self by disloyal Factions. We have been Heady  
 and Ungovernable, which is the most certain sign of  
 approaching ruine. In the heat of our clamorous zeal  
 for the Protestant Religion we have dishonoured it in  
 the highest degree: and after all our fierce outcries a-  
 gainst Popery, the worst of its abominations have  
 been committed amongst us. God speaks thus to *Ju-  
 dah*. *Thou that hast judged thy Sisters [ Samaria and  
 Sodom ] bear thine own shame for thy sins which thou*  
 hast

*hast committed more abominable than they: they are more righteous than thou: be confounded and bear thy shame, in that thou hast justified thy sisters, Ezek. XVI. 52.* Is not this discourse very applicable to us? May not God thus reproach us, "You have judged your *Sister Rome*, but have equalled if not outdone her *abominations*. And the villanies you condemn in *her* you have justified by worse practices?"

Are there *Jesuits* among the *Papists*, so are there among us, if agreement with them in their worst principles and practices may intitle men to the Name who want almost nothing else but the Order and Habit? Are their *Jesuits* dangerous Incendiaries? so are ours. Do the *Romish Jesuits* subject Princes to the Pope? ours subject them to the People. Do their *Jesuits* contrive the deposing and murdering of Kings? so do ours. Do they give the Pope a power to absolve Subjects from their Allegiance, and dispense with their Oaths? ours make quicker work of it, and without that piece of Superstition and Formality allow every man to doe it for himself. Do they allow Equivocation and mental Reservation? ours doe worse, who condemn it in the Principle, but admit it in Practice. Do they make Oaths and Sacraments the Bonds of iniquity, the Seals of secrecy in their hellish designs? ours are not very unlike them, who conceal as hellish Treasons, contrary to their Oaths to discover them; who take Oaths and Sacraments to qualify them for the service of a Faction, and to possess themselves of Power to ruine both Church and State. Do they at *Rome* propagate Religion by Assassination and Massacres? there have been also those among us who stuck at neither for the accomplishment of their Devilish Plots. And though they do not canonize or saint Traitors as the Pope doth, they dub them  
HE-



*HEROES*, and *ASSERTORS* of *RELIGION* and *LIBERTY*; which poor reward may for ought I know animate our Zealots to as desperate attempts, as a Saintship doth the *Romish*.

When I consider what zeal for the Purity of Religion these men pretend, that they are for purer Congregations not onely than the *Roman*, but even the best reformed Churches; that they would be thought *Reformatissimi*, the most sincere, most zealous, nay the onely Protestants in the Nation, these pretences aggravate their crimes beyond those of *Romish* Traytors. And I shall not fear to say, *they have justified their Sister, and the Papists are more righteous than they.*

In short, our blood Feuds, and the devilish Confederacies of Atheists and Enthusiasts presage ruine to us: and we act as though we designed to prevent the stroke of divine Vengeance, and become our own Executioners.

When the greatest part of this City lay in ashes, and its wealth was consumed by the Fire, when nothing but desolation presented it self to our view, and thousands lay in the Fields, a man would have thought *London* was as miserable as it could be made. But when I behold the universal Corruption of manners, the Debauchery, the Uncleanness, Profaneness and other abominations which are committed in it, without shame, and though not with allowance, yet with impunity; when I see how factious, heady and ungovernable men are, I must needs profess, that in all its present Splendour I look upon the condition of this City to be worse than when it lay in ruins. For a City is not so effectually undone, by the demolishing of its Walls, and burning of its Houses, as by the banishing Religion, Righteousness, Truth and Peace out of the midst of it, and the general corruption of man-

ners.

*Non tam manium subversione, domorumque exustione Civitas perire dicenda est, quam justitiæ exterminio, & morum corruptione. Nic. de Clemangiis. Ep. 101.*

ners. And 'tis a far less lamentable sight to behold a people under such calamities, than to see them unreformed nay worse after them.

This seems to be our case. We have passed through the Fire, but are not purified, our dross remains in us. We are stupid and insensible, and it was but necessary to erect a Pillar in remembrance of it, for the Sufferers themselves seem to have forgotten it. For this solemn Anniversary Humiliation is dwindled into almost nothing, saving (I am loth to say the Pomp, I hope 'tis the Devotion of) *this Great Appearance*. How do many flie the Penance of this Fast, and entertain themselves with all sorts of Pleasures at their Country-Houses? On this day when the Lord of Hosts calls us to weeping and mourning, there is nothing but joy and mirth eating Flesh and drinking Wine. I should not have mentioned this to this Honourable Auditory, but that I have my self with some trouble and concern observed it to be the Practice of many grave and eminent Citizens. They seem to have no remembrance of that dreadfull Fire, and no fear of those worse Judgments we have to apprehend. In one sense they will never forget the Fire, they will tell you they feel it yet in their Estates, they will with the impotent man as St. Chrysostome speaks, *ἐκλεγόμενοι τῶν συμφορῶν* tell tragical Stories of their losses, how many hundreds and thousands they are the worse for it, and perhaps magnify their losses beyond truth; but they forget why God brought this great calamity upon the City, and how much fuell their own Sins contributed to its flames.

If ever our Saviour's advice was necessary, sure 'tis so now, and I can never too often repeat and press it. *O sin no more, sin no more*. The measure of our iniquities seems to be well nigh filled up, and unless  
a speedy

Isai. XXII.  
12. 13.

Chrysost.  
Tom. 5. hom.  
62.



a speedy and general Reformation appease the wrath of God, it will be too great a favour for us to expect that he should smite us any more for our Correction, we must look for some worse thing than either Plague or Fire or any other of those Judgments that have hitherto come upon us.

Lest a worse thing happen unto us? How is it possible? No Fire can ever spread in these new brick buildings, as the former did in the old timber-houses. Some worse thing? What can be worse than such a general Calamity, which ruin'd thousands, which not only impoverisht the City, but the whole Kingdom, what have we worse to fear?

My Brethren, be not deceived: Though ye have drunk of a bitter cup, yet its bitterness hath been hitherto taken off with a large mixture of mercy: ye have not yet tasted *τὸ ἀγέτω* the Wine of his wrath unmixed, ye have not drunk up the dregs thereof. Flatter not your selves with the thoughts that the worst is already past. Ye do not understand the power of his Anger, and therefore do not entertain just fears of his displeasure. He can if he see good punish you again in the same way, and with as much ease lay waste your Stately New-Buildings, as he did the old Rotten ones. Though your City be raised in glory 'tis not raised in incorruption. If it be not in so great danger of casual Fire, yet sure the Vengeance of God can propagate such a Calamity farther than all the Malice, Art and Industry of the worst Bouteuseus. Where the breath of the Lord kindles a Fire, all things are as Hay and Stubble before it.

Have ye nothing worse to fear? recollect your selves, and consider what ye at that time feared, but through the mercy of God escap'd a Massacre by the bloody hands of those, who burnt your City. Your fire might

Rev. XIV. 10.

*Ἄνεστ' ἡ πόλις*

*ἀμύνην δεύ-*

*αν οὐκ ἔσται*

And. Caesar.

in loc.

Psal. XC. 11.

might have been like that *Rev. VIII. 7. Mingled with bloud.* God might have made your ruines everlasting Desolations; and whereas he hath graciously said unto this *City thou shalt be built,* and to our *Temples your Foundations shall be laid.* The Lord might have devoted *London* as he did *Jericho*, and have laid a Curse upon the man, who should have presumed to lay the first Stone of its New-Buildings.

See his Majesty's Declaration.

Have ye nothing worse to fear? hath not God by a miracle of mercy newly discovered and delivered us from a greater danger? There wanted onely the *PERMISSION of HEAVEN* to have brought a worse thing upon us. For *HELL* was ready to *BREAK LOOSE* again upon us with more *Barbarous fury* than ever, In the Murther of our *KING* and his Royal Brother, in the Assassination of the Publick Ministers of State, and the Principal Magistrates of this City, and all the mischeivous consequences of Cruelty, and Confusion. Had not God by his wonderfull Providence prevented them, the Combustions of Eighty three, might have proved more fatal to the City and Nation than the Flames of Sixty six.

Methinks I hear the Voice of God our Saviour after this great deliverance saying to us of this Nation and City, as he did to the Impotent man in my Text, *Sin no more.* And if we can be but so wise and happy as to receive his Admonition, we are secure from the Threatning that follows it, *Lest a worse thing come unto thee.*

Let me then beseech you, Brethren, in Christ's stead, *both by the Judgments and mercies of the Lord, be reconciled to God.* As ye desire the continuance of his blessings, or as ye would avert worse Calamities than any ye have yet felt. As ye tender the peace and Prosperity of this City. *Awake to Righteousness, and*  
 34. *sin*

Isai. XLIV. 28.

Josh. VI. 26.

Rom. XII. 1.  
2 Cor. V. 20.

1. Cor. XV. 34.

*fin no more : Wash you , make you clean ; put away the* Iſa. L. 16. 17.  
*evil of your doings before the eyes of the Lord, ceaſe to*  
*doe evil, learn to doe well.* Have compaſſion on your  
 ſelves, forſake *theſe iniquities which ſeparate between*  
*you and your God, and have hid his face from you,* if you Iſa. LIX. 2.  
 hope to prevail with him to be mercifull to you and  
 bleſs you. Improve this opportunity of making your  
 peace with him, which the Wiſedom and Piety of our  
 Government hath put into your hands. Let the re-  
 membrance of the late dreadfull Fire teach you the  
 Fear of the Lord, which is the trueſt Wiſedom, and  
 the beſt Preſervative from the like Calamities. Let  
 the ſincerity of this days Humiliation appear in its  
 happy influence on the future conduct of your lives.  
 Let it ſo reſreſh the memory of God's Judgments  
 and your ſins, as to make you walk humbly with  
 him the whole year after. The good effects of a Faſt  
 depend not ſo much upon the ſolemnity as the ſeri-  
 ouſneſs of our Repentance : not ſo much upon the  
 number of our Prayers or the noiſe of our cries, as on  
 the liſting up of holy hands and clean hearts to God.  
 In vain do we liſt up our voice, and cry mightily to  
 the Lord for mercy, whiſt our Sins cry out againſt  
 us, and call louder to heaven for Vengeance. Without  
 reformation we may proclaim, but cannot ſanctify a  
 Faſt ; the calling of a ſolemn aſſembly this day will  
 be but an affront to God : Our Sacrifice will be num-  
 bred among our abominations, and our Prayers will  
 be turned into Sin.

*Fruſtrà ete-  
 nim vox ad  
 Deum clamat  
 cum ſclerata  
 vita recla-  
 mat. Nic. de  
 Clemang.  
 Ep. 77.*

If we deſire to appeaſe the wrath of God, which  
 ſeems not to be yet turned away , we muſt ſanctifie  
 ſuch a Faſt as he hath choſen. We muſt *break off our* Dan. IV. 27.  
*Sins by Righteouſneſs, and our Iniquities by ſhewing*  
*Mercy on the poor ;* eſpecially ſuch as have been Suf-  
 fers by this and the like Calamities. We muſt *loofe*

**JAL. LVIII.** *the bands of wickedness, and let the oppressed go free ;*  
**6, 7, 8, &c.** *we must deal our bread to the hungry, and bring the*  
*poor out-casts into our houses ; when we see the naked, we*  
*must cover them, and not hide our selves from our own*  
*flesh. We must draw out our soul to the hungry, and sa-*  
*tisfie the afflicted. Then shall we CALL upon the*  
*LORD, and he will ANSWER ; we shall CRY,*  
*and he will say, HERE I AM. Our few old waste*  
*places shall be built, and our imperfect foundations shall*  
*be raised up, and the Lord shall for ever be the RE-*  
*PAIRER OF OUR BREACHES.*

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*T H E E N D.*

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